

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 IOE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

ACDA-05 ARA-06 AGR-05 CEA-01 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INT-05 LAB-04 CIEP-01 STR-04 ITC-01 TRSE-00 FEAE-00

OMB-01 XMB-02 OFA-01 DLOS-04 SAL-01 /125 W

----- 123930

O R 040838Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2647

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 1218

NOFORN

CINCPAC PASS POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG PFOR MY

SUBJ: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS -- MALAYSIA

REF: STATE 37591 (DTG 150340Z FEB 76)

SUMMARY. THIS TELEGRAM CONTAINS THE INFORMATION

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REQUESTED IN REFTEL. KUALA LUMPUR DESIGNATES

POLITICAL CHIEF FRANK C. BENNETT, JR., AS
MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS OFFICER. END SUMMARY.

1. MALAYSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY HAS MOVED INCREASINGLY AWAY FROM ASSOCIATION WITH BRITAIN AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS TOWARD NON-ALIGNMENT SINCE ABOUT 1969. WHILE ITS BASIC SYMPATHIES STILL LIE WITH THE WEST AND INTERNALLY IT IS ANTI-COMMUNIST, THE MALAYSIAN LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT IT IS IN THE COUNTRY'S INTERESTS TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC EQUIDISTANCE FROM THE MAJOR POWERS. THE GOM'S CHERISHED HOPE IS FOR THE CREATION OF A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY (ZPFN) IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO PROTECT IT FROM THE PRESSURES OF GREAT POWERS POLITICS AND MALAYSIA SUPPORTS THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE AND OPPOSES EXPANSION OF DIEGO GARCIA FOR THE SAME REASON. IT HAS RECEIVED LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE ZPFN FROM THE GREAT POWERS AND THEREFORE PLANS EVENTUALLY TO SEEK "RECOGNITION" OF THE ZONE THROUGH MOBILIZATION OF THIRD WORLD SUPPORT IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER MULTILATERAL BODIES. IN ADDITION TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE ZPFN IN PRINCIPAL, MALAYSIA'S PRIMARY MULTILATERAL INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES IN 1976 INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

-- WORK FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF AND SUPPORT FOR PRICE STABILIZATION SCHEMES FOR KEY PRIMARY COMMODITIES, PARTICULARLY RUBBER.

-- NEGOTIATE IN THE MTN CONCESSIONS FAVORABLE TO MALAYSIAN EXPORTS, PARTICULARLY TROPICAL PRODUCTS AND MANUFACTURES AND SEMI-MANUFACTURES.

-- DEFEND THE MALAYSIAN AND INDONESIAN CLAIMS TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE MALACCA STRAITS.

-- AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO ISSUES WHICH REFLECT GREAT POWER RIVALRIES (E.G. KOREA).

-- AVOID ANTAGONIZING VIETNAM AND IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ITS GOVERNMENT IN HOPES OF AVERTING AN
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ACTIVE ROLE BY HANOI IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN INSURGENCIES.

-- underscore MALAYSIA'S NON-ALIGNED IMAGE
THROUGH CONTINUED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES
IN ALL CAMPS.

-- PROMOTE CLOSER ASSOCIATIONS WITH WHAT THE GOM
TERMS THE "MIDDLE POWERS" (E.G. AUSTRALIA, CANADA,

BRAZIL).

-- ENCOURAGE FULL-FUNDING OF INTERNATIONAL MONETARY INSTITUTIONS BY THE DEVELOPED AND OIL-RICH COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO MAKE MORE CREDITS AVAILABLE TO LDC'S.

2. INDONESIA IS THE COUNTRY WITH THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON MALAYSIA, AND THE GROUPING WHICH MOST GREATLY AFFECTS THE GOM'S FOREIGN POLICIES IS THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN). ORIGINALLY DEDICATED TO PROMOTING REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COOPERATION, ASEAN'S CHIEF ACCOMPLISHMENT TO DATE HAS BEEN TO BRING MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, SINGAPORE, THAILAND AND THE PHILIPPINES INTO CLOSER ACCORD ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES. THIS HAS RESULTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASEAN AS A REASONABLY EFFECTIVE VOTING BLOC IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, ALTHOUGH WHEN INTERESTS DIVERGE THERE IS NO OBLIGATION TO GO BEYOND CONSULTATION. THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT GROUPING IN TERMS OF PUBLIC ATTENTION, IS THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE SYSTEM (OF WHICH MALAYSIA IS A MEMBER OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE), WHILE THE THIRD PROBABLY IS THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE SYSTEM. IN THE CASE OF EACH OF THESE GROUPINGS MALAYSIA TRADES ITS VOTES FOR SUPPORT FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ON ISSUES OF DIRECT NATIONAL INTEREST, SEEKING IN THIS WAY TO ENHANCE ITS LIMITED INFLUENCE OVER BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES OF DOMESTIC IMPORTANCE, SUCH AS COMMODITY PRICE STABILIZATION. IT ALSO JOINS WITH THE THIRD WORLD IN THE NORTH-SOUTH CONTEST, IT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN THE GROUP OF 77 MEETINGS AND IN UNCTAD, BECAUSE AS A PRODUCER OF BASIC COMMODITIES IT FEELS ITSELF TO BE AT A DISADVANTAGE VIS-A-VIS THE INDUSTRIAL NATIONS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED, THAT MALAYSIA AND THE OTHER ASEAN

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COUNTRIES CUSTOMARILY HOLD JOINT DISCUSSIONS PRIOR TO ALL IMPORTANT MULTILATERAL MEETINGS, WHETHER ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2648

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3. GOM POLICY ON ISSUES IN MULTILATERAL MEETINGS IS USUALLY SET BEFORE THE MEETINGS BEGIN AND DELEGATION CHIEFS AND PERM REPS, WHILE FREE TO QUESTION POLICY THROUGH INTERNAL CHANNELS, MUST VOTE AS INSTRUCTED. THE DELEGATIONS ARE USUALLY LED BY SENIOR POLITICIANS AND OFFICIALS WHO HAVE A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF TACTICAL LEEWAY.

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4. THUS FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO ONE APPOINTED TO A MALAYSIAN DELEGATION WHOSE PERSON POLITICAL STRENGTH HAS ENABLED HIM TO IGNORE INSTRUCTIONS ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE. ONE EXCEPTION MAY BE THE LOS DELEGATION HEADED BY THE MINISTER OF LAW/ATTORNEY GENERAL AND WHICH USUALLY INCLUDES ALL OF MALAYSIA'S FEW LOS

EXPERTS. BUT EVEN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT KUALA LUMPUR ON ANY MAJOR SHIFT AS A COMPROMISE OF MALAYSIA'S CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY IN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA.

5. THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT GOES OUT OF ITS WAY TO AVOID IDENTIFICATION WITH ANY OF THE THREE GREAT POWERS, INCLUDING THE U.S., BUT IT IS QUITE WILLING TO CONSULT PRIVATELY ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST. AFTER LAST YEAR'S CONFLICT OVER THE KOREAN ISSUE IN THE UNGA SEVERAL SENIOR MALAYSIAN OFFICIALS CRITICIZED THE U.S. ORCHESTRATION OF OPPOSITION TO THE ALGERIAN RESOLUTION, CLAIMING THAT HEAVY-HANDED BEHIND THE SCENES MANEUVERS BY THE U.S. TENDED TO WEAKEN EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE ROK BY LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE ASEAN BLOC. THESE OFFICIALS HAVE URGED US TO LEAVE LOBBYING TO THE COUNTRIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED (E.G. SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN) RATHER THAN TO SEEK TO MANIPULATE ASEAN BECAUSE THE BACKLASH FROM RADICAL THIRD WORLD STATES COULD DISADVANTAGE MALAYSIA AND THE OTHERS. OFFICIALS HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE U.S. MAKE ITS POSITIONS ON KEY ISSUES KNOWN VERY FAR IN ADVANCE (E.G. THE GUAM AND VIRGIN ISLANDS ISSUE) SO THAT THESE CAN BE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WHEN PLANNING IS FIRST UNDERTAKEN FOR POLICIES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE VARIOUS FORA.

6. WE WOULD LIKE TO OFFER SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT OF MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS RAISED BY REF MESSAGE AND OTHER TELEGRAMS. ON "STATUS" ISSUES (PARA 7, STATE 37592), WE FEEL THAT WE SHOULD NOT APPEAR TO GIVE GREATER EMPHASIS TO VOTING OUTCOME THAN THE STATES DIRECTLY INVOLVED. ON THE KOREAN ISSUE LAST FALL, OUR MAIN ARGUMENT IN SEEKING DEFEAT OF THE ALGERIAN SPONSORED RESOLUTION WAS THAT PASSAGE COULD HAVE SERIOUS SECURITY CONSEQUENCES ON THE KOREAN

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PENINSULA. THE ACTIONS OF THE ROK AND GOJ EMBASSIES HERE, HOWEVER, DID NOT REFLECT A LEVEL OF CONCERN APPROACHING OURS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT KOREA AND JAPAN WOULD BE THE COUNTRIES MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED. THE ROK AMBASSADOR WAS IN NEW YORK DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF THE UNGA. THE CHARGE DELIVERED LETTERS FROM PRESIDENT PARK AND BUTTON-HOLED LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS, BUT FROM CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL OBSERVATION OF THE SOUTH KOREANS WHEN THEY REALLY WANT SOMETHING, THIS WAS A HOLDING OPERATION. THE ROK AMBASSADOR ON HIS RETURN WAS RELAXED ABOUT THE MALAYSIAN VOTE AND NEITHER THE ROK NOR JAPAN TOLD THE GOM THAT MALAYSIAN ABSTENTION ON BOTH RESOLUTIONS MIGHT AFFECT THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS. ON

LEVEL, FREQUENCY, AND INTENSITY, WE WERE FAR OUT
IN FRONT.

7. THE PHRASE "WE ATTACH IMPORTANCE" WAS USED FREQUENTLY
IN INSTRUCTIONS ON UNGA ISSUES LAST FALL. IT SEEMS TO
US TACTICALLY UNDESIRABLE TO USE THIS FORMULATION,
PARTICULARLY WITH THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. THE IMPORTANCE
TO US SHOULD BE MANIFEST IN THE ARGUMENTS WE USE
TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR OUR POSITION. WHEN WE SAY
SO EXPLICITLY WE GIVE THE CONDESCENDING IMPRESSION THAT
WE KNOW BEST AND EXPECT OTHERS TO ACCEPT OUR PRIORITIES.

8. POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF FRANK BENNETT HAS BEEN
DESIGNATED MLAO.
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Draft Date: 04 MAR 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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